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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [AM](#) [AJ](#) [GG](#) [TU](#)
SUBJECT: GUL IN BAKU AND YEREVAN; GEORGIAN PM IN ISTANBUL

REF: ANKARA 1478

Classified By: Ambassador Ross Wilson, reasons 1.4 (b,d)

NO CRITICISM FROM BAKU

11. (C) MFA South Caucasus Section Head Firat Sunel briefed us September 11 on President Gul's September 10 visit to Baku. Despite criticism in the Azerbaijani media and some Turkish outlets of Gul's September 6 trip to Yerevan, President Aliyev gave Gul and the visiting Turkish side the impression that he understood the need for dialogue between Turkey and Armenia.

PRESSING ON WITH ARMENIA DIALOGUE

12. (C) Turkey and Armenia intend to continue their dialogue. The purpose of Gul's visit to Yerevan was to underscore the political will on both sides to push ahead on normalizing their relations; details were tasked to the foreign ministries to work out. Sunel, who traveled to Yerevan with Deputy U/S Cevikoz in advance of the Gul visit and then joined Gul in Yerevan, said Presidents Gul and Sargsian took up Nagorno-Karabakh in the context of regional stability and cooperation. He believes Armenia is optimistic about making progress on N-K, following the Azerbaijani presidential elections in October; Turkey shares this optimistic assessment. Armenian President Sargsian and FM Nalbandian expressed their strong support for Turkey's Caucasus Stability and Cooperation Platform concept and expressed their readiness to work on it together with Turkey.

13. (C) In a 2.5 hour meeting following Gul's departure from Yerevan, FMs Babacan and Nalbandian focused largely on how to carry the dialogue forward. They agreed to meet in September during UNGA in New York. Sunel could not confirm that Gul and Sargsian, who will both be in New York, would also meet at UNGA, but did not rule out the possibility. (NOTE: The Turkish press reported September 12 that Aliyev does not intend to travel to New York, presumably ruling out a presidential-level trilateral at that time. END NOTE.)

ASSESSMENTS BEGUN ON PROMISED GORI RECONSTRUCTION

14. (C) Sunel also touched upon Georgian PM Gurgenedze's September 12 visit to Istanbul, where he held talks with PM Erdogan. Noting the Georgian PM's traditional responsibility for trade and economic affairs, Gurgenedze discussed with PM Erdogan Turkish reconstruction assistance, pointing to extensive pledges the GOG side is claiming to see from the U.S. and EU to construct new housing. He noted Erdogan's

August 14 promise to President Saakashvili to rebuild 15 damaged apartment blocks in Gori, as well as a damaged hospital (reftel). The GOT dispatched three engineers from the Turkish Aid Agency (TIKA) two weeks ago to assess the area; TIKA is coordinating with the Prime Ministry Housing Development Administration (TOKI) on the project.

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WILSON